

Is. 40:6 A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.

The second *voice* of verses 3-11 speaks in verse 6 saying, "Call out," meaning to *Call out* the words of *comfort* (v.1) that were to be presented to the Hebrew people. A third *voice* answers in verses 6 and 7 with words of discouragement—"What shall I call out?" This third *voice* sees no use in calling out words of comfort due to the nation's past on-again, off-again commitment to walking with Jehovah. In fact, it compares the Hebrew people to the *grass*, which *withers* and *the flower fades* (v.7), blossoming yet faltering time and time again during her unstable past—the book of Judges being just one example.

Is. 40:7 The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass.

The third *voice* continues by saying, "Surely the people are grass"—a negative statement pointing to the unfaithfulness of the Hebrew people. After all, their history up to this point had been inundated with seasons of obedience followed by seasons of discontentment and rebellion. Would the nation ever consistently walk with Jehovah? Was it only wishful thinking to believe that the sons of Abraham would one day wake up and, without fail, and without compromise, pursue the God who so loved and cherished them? This is what the third *voice* is expressing.

Is. 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

In this verse the second *voice* answers the questions of the third *voice*. It states that even though the words of the third *voice* were true, what must be considered is that God's *word* will always come to fruition regardless of the degree to which Israel disobeys. One thing is certain. What God has stated *stands forever*. And what has God stated? That one day the entire Jewish nation will repent and walk in the truth, never again rebelling against God's authority. Therefore, regardless of what transpires during the process, the spiritual inconsistency of the Hebrew nation will one day cease when she makes the choice to accept Jesus as Messiah.

Is. 40:9 ¶ Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

A fourth *voice* speaks in verses 9-11. The American Standard Version renders this verse as follows: "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up on a high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God!"

It is obvious that the fourth *voice* is fulfilling what verses 1 and 2 prescribed, for it speaks words of *comfort* to *Jerusalem*. It will be through the words coming forth from *Jerusalem* that *the cities of Judah* (as well as all Israel) will hear this *good news*—will hear the gospel. The *good news* that will be presented to *Jerusalem* (and go forth from Jerusalem) is that their *God*, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is coming. The *two witnesses* during the first half of the Tribulation (Revelation 11:1-13) will play a major role in communicating the truth concerning Christ's Second Coming.

Is. 40:10 Behold, the Lord God will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, And His recompense before Him.

Note that it is Jehovah's *arm* that brings about these events. In Isaiah 51:5, 9, 52:10, 53:1, 59:16, 62:8, 63:5, 12 (as well as the notes associated with those verses) we find that the *arm* is Jesus Christ. Therefore, at the Second Coming, Jesus will destroy the unredeemed and *reward* the saints (Isaiah 40:10).

Is. 40:11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs, And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.

Jesus will *shepherd...His flock* (the Jews) and bring them back (in a state of belief) into the land promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18. Thus, the Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-5) will be fulfilled, confirming that His word truly does stand *forever* (Isaiah 40:8).

As you continue, remember that Isaiah 40:1-11 gives us a summary of what is contained in Isaiah 40:12-66:24.

Is. 40:12 ¶ Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance, And the hills in a pair of scales?

Remember that verse 12 begins the section of this book (Isaiah 40:12-48:22) which addresses the phrase, "*that her warfare has ended*" (Isaiah 40:2). You can read what was stated concerning this section in the notes associated with Isaiah 40:2. What Isaiah does here is interesting indeed. He begins to compare the greatness of God with the total ineptness of manmade idols. Why? Judah trusted in idols before she was taken to Babylon in Jeremiah's day. After her return from Babylon, idolatry of the type that had previously plagued the nation ceased for a season, although the nation continued to disobey through other means of defiance to God's authority. For example, the Jews fell into idolatry during the 400 years of silence between the Old and New Testaments, leading to the Maccabean revolt in 167 BC. Even today they continue to listen to the words of their rabbis rather than the words of God—a form of idolatry. Therefore, even though they presently do not worship idols per-se, they hold to a form of idolatry that is unacceptable before their Maker. A large portion of the Jews will again fall into idolatry during the Tribulation, a problem that will be remedied through the national regeneration of all Jews on the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

In verses 12-17, Isaiah addresses God's greatness by asking a series of questions. Just in case you need to hear it today, maybe due to difficult circumstances or perhaps just to reassure yourself of God's "bigness," the God of the universe is so omnipotent, all powerful, and supreme that He is capable of holding all the *waters* of the seas in the palm of His hand—at the same time (v.12). Can we even begin to imagine such a thing? Consider this as well. A *span* is the distance between the extended thumb and the little finger, approximately nine inches. If God "*marked off the heavens by the span*" (v.12), this means that He measured the universe, in all of its vastness, with the breadth of His hand. He also *calculated the dust of the earth by the measure* (v.12), indicating that He possessed a container capable of holding all the dust of the ground at one time. He also *weighed the mountains in a balance, And the hills in a pair of scales* (v.12), confirming that He had in His possession weighing devices large enough to hold all the mountains simultaneously. The same applies to the *hills* (v.12). This means that He possibly picked up all the *mountains*, weighed them, then picked up all the *hills*, and weighed them. How could man (or anything man-generated) ever compete with such a display of strength and vigor? What idol could even begin to measure up to such greatness? This is the very point being made in verses 12-17.

Is. 40:13 Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has informed Him?

Isaiah addressed God's omniscience in verses 13 and 14. Because He is all-knowing, no one has ever served *as His counselor* (given Him advice). It is interesting that Paul was thinking of this verse while communicating Romans 11:34.

Is. 40:14 With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, And informed Him of the way of understanding?

God has never been *taught* by anyone, neither has anyone *informed Him* concerning something He did not understand.

Is. 40:15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.

God is so vast and immeasurable that *the nations*, in comparison, are nothing more than *a drop from a bucket* or *a speck of dust on the scales*. We all know that *a drop* of water in *a bucket* is nothing, nor does *a speck of dust* even register *on* a pair of *scales*. This is the significance of the nations of the earth in comparison to God.

Is. 40:16 Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

The great trees of *Lebanon*, were they to be burned, as well as all the *beasts* of *Lebanon*, were they to be sacrificed, would be an inadequate sacrifice if offered to the greatness of God.

Is. 40:17 All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.

All the nations are as nothing before God when compared to His greatness.

Is. 40:18 ¶ To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?

Isaiah confirms, in verses 18-26, that nothing can be compared with *God*.

Is. 40:19 As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith fashions chains of silver.

An *idol*, in the case of the wealthy, is crafted by the combined effort of *a craftsman*,...*goldsmith*, and *silversmith*. Therefore, it is worthless. Jeremiah 10:3-16 ties in well here.

Is. 40:20 He who is too impoverished for such an offering Selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman To prepare an idol that will not totter.

Those who cannot afford an expensive idol cut down *a tree* and hire *a skillful craftsman* to *prepare* their *idol* (to give it a good appearance) so it *will not totter* (tip over).

Is. 40:21 ¶ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Addressing all the nations of the earth in verses 21-26 (the "you" in "Do you not know" is plural), Isaiah continues to compare God with idols throughout the remainder of this chapter. Jehovah, who prophesies concerning the future and always brings it to pass, has existed *from*

before *the foundations of the earth*; in fact, He who created *the earth* has always existed. Idols only last for a short while. Who then would be unwise enough to worship an idol? This is Isaiah's point.

Is. 40:22 It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

This verse confirms that *the earth* is a sphere, for the word "vault" can be interpreted "circle." Therefore, when it was discovered that the *earth* was round, God was not startled or surprised. Why? He is the all-knowing (omniscient) Creator of all things.

When compared to God, all who inhabit *the earth...are like grasshoppers* (are nothing). If men are viewed by God as such, then that which is made by man is infinitely inferior to Him? Therefore, no idol carries any significance whatsoever. After all, God is so powerful that He *stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in*. When considering the vastness of *the heavens*, this statement is infinitely beyond man's ability to comprehend. It is for this reason that God is God, and there are no substitutes.

Because God is eternal and "*sits above the vault of the earth*," He can continually view eternity past through eternity future, never once wondering what might happen next. Time was made for the created, not the Creator, for He transcends time (Psalm 90:4; 2Peter 3:8). He, therefore, is the eternal present, the "*I Am*" (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58), not the "I was" or the "I will be." Consequently, He is never surprised or caught off guard, even though He has given man a free will to choose as he pleases.

Is. 40:23 He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.

Because God places all *rulers* in their respective positions of *authority* (Romans 13:1), He can remove them whenever He pleases. Consequently, He is greater than any man who holds any position of authority.

Is. 40:24 Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble.

God is so powerful that His breath alone can remove rulers from their positions of authority.

Is. 40:25 "To whom then will you liken Me That I should be his equal?" says the Holy One.

Based on what has been addressed in Isaiah 40:12-24, it is obvious that God has no *equal*.

Is. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing.

God knows the *number* and *name* of all the *stars*. Even David was amazed with *the heavens* (Psalm 19:1-6), even comparing them to God's *lovingkindness* for us (Psalm 103:11). The more we discover about space, the more we witness God's *power* and love. *His power* is infinite, but his love for us is infinite as well (read Psalm 103:11, considering that the average distance between just two of the *stars* is 30 trillion miles). No wonder Paul included the words of Romans 1:20 in his most famous epistle.

Dr. Norm Geisler and Dr. Frank Turek state the following in their book *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*:

There are 100 billion stars in our galaxy alone, and the average distance between these stars is 30 trillion miles. The Space Shuttle travels at 17,000 miles per hour, or almost 5 miles per second. At this speed, it would take 201,450 years to travel between just two of the stars, and there are 100 billion of those in our galaxy alone! The number of stars in the entire universe is much larger; in fact, they are compared to all the grains of sand on all the beaches of the earth. And it takes 200,000 years to travel from just one grain of sand to the other at five miles per second. A God who could name all those stars and suspend them so strategically in space is absolutely awesome! Note: if the stars were closer together or farther apart planetary orbits would be affected, and if the orbits are affected chaos would result.

Oh the greatness, strength, knowledge, and wisdom of God!

Is. 40:27 ¶ Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"?

Isaiah is addressing the Hebrew people throughout the remainder of this chapter. The reason Isaiah dealt with God's *greatness* and superiority in verses 12-26 was to prove Jehovah's ability to fulfill His promises to the Hebrew nation. When God's word is studied in its entirety, it is obvious that the Jews viewed themselves as suffering unjustly when taken to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. The same mindset will prevail until the nation recognizes her sin and accepts Jesus as Messiah at the end of the Tribulation. It is then that Israel will see God's promises fulfilled to the max (and His *justice* displayed in its totality) through the destruction of her enemies and subsequent exaltation of the Jewish nation throughout the Millennium.

Is. 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

The word “you,” in *Do you not know*, is singular. Therefore, Isaiah is addressing the Hebrew people only. Isaiah’s point is that it is inexcusable that the Jews would say that they *Do...not know* and *Have...not heard*. After all, it was the Hebrew nation that *God* appeared before and entrusted with His Law. It is a given that no nation has the degree of revelation concerning God’s Person that Israel has received. Therefore, they should have known that He is *The Everlasting God*—meaning that He knows the future as well as He knows the past. He is also *the Lord*, Jehovah, pointing to His ability to remain faithful to His covenants with His people. He is *Creator* as well, meaning that His words are powerful enough to cause things to just pop into existence. How could this *God* ever *become weary or tired*? On top of all of this, *His understanding is* infinite due to His omniscience. Therefore, *God* will see to it that the justice promised to the nation will come to full fruition through the events at the end of the Tribulation as well as throughout the Millennium.

Is. 40:29 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power.

God actually strengthens *the weary* and *increases the power* of those who lack *might*. This verse, obviously, points to the Jews who will experience the events associated with the Tribulation.

Is. 40:30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,

If the unbelieving *youths* of the Jewish nation *grow weary and tired, And the vigorous young men stumble badly*, so will all the other members of the nation (the less energetic) who walk in unbelief.

Is. 40:31 Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Those who rest in God’s promises during the Tribulation will be strengthened. They will also fail to *become weary*. It is this group of Jews that will observe God’s faithfulness in fulfilling the justice due the nation of Israel (read the notes associated with verse 27).

There is a good possibility that the phrase, “*gain new*,” can actually be interpreted, “exchange.” There is no doubt that God exchanges the believer’s strength for His own when the believer waits in faith upon Him (Romans 5:10; 1Corinthians 15:10).